

SEWER COMMISSION MINUTES

January 10, 2007

Mr. Briggs - The regular meeting of the Town of North Smithfield Sewer Commission was called to order on Wednesday, January 10, 2006 at 7:02 pm.

Roll Call - Mrs. Paul - In attendance was: Mr. Tikoian, Mr. McGee, Mr. Nordstrom, Mrs. Briggs, Mr. Connolly, and Mrs. Paul, Secretary. Also present was Mr. Mr. Alvarez.

1. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Mrs. Briggs -Approval of Sewer Commission for December 13, 2006 minutes.

MOTION made by Mr. Nordstrom, seconded by Mr. Connolly and voted unanimously on an aye vote 5-0 to accept and approve the December 13, 2006 minutes.

2. REPORT FROM SUPERINTENDENT

Mr. Alvarez – No report received from Mr. Alvarez for the month of December. He will provide an update at the next meeting.

3. FACILITY PLAN DISCUSSION – Setting Priorities

Mrs. Briggs expressed to Mr. Geremia that there are some changes and typographical issues on the plan, she suggested to members to make copies and forward the corrections directly to Mr. Geremia. She stated that after reviewing the facility plan, that the main point is to identify the districts and get a prioritized list together and request a joint workshop with the council to try to identify for them where the commission needs to go as well as to socialize the whole idea of taking on infrastructure enhancement and proactively going forward.

Mr. Geremia (referred to his book on Public Hearing dated 10-11-2006) and he referred to page 1-16 and stated is was the summary of the proposed new sewer areas included with it was the associated costs. He referred to the table below it which gave a cost per dwelling unit. The way he summarized things and how they picked the service area is as follows: What they attempted to do was to identify what is the future service area, took the criteria of what was presented earlier and they looked at ISDS failures, at groundwater and surface water recharge areas and looked at the existing sewer district and the residential density of each of the homes. They superimposed all of the mappings and they came up with the sewer district. (He referred to the page after 1-8 and the figure on 1-5). And then they identified the sewer districts. He also took into account the comprehensive plan and looked at the growth areas that are for residential and the needs of the community and then he identified the service area. He stated that the yellow (as he referred to the map) is the existing sewer areas of town and the different shaded areas are

the adjoining to the present sewer district. He referred to pages 1-3 and 1-4 identify well water recharge areas and 1-4 represents the ISDS failures. It focuses on where the residential units are small, either frequency of ISDS failures and it is in the ground water recharge of the water system. So he has identified those as project areas. He referred to the table 1-16 indicating what those projects are and the cost associated with them. He stated that if it is difficult to prioritize various projects because of needs of the community from high to low and state that this is the future service area and then as money becomes available, select from those groups and by identifying and defining the sewer district, then they would qualify for SRF funding. Mr. Geremia stated that everyone must all agree on the future service area and how it should be dealt with. He stated that by identifying the sewer district, they then can get the funding for it. He must move forward and submit it to DEM for their draft review and then they can go to a public hearing.

Mr. Geremia stated that they were limited to the mappings that were generated with the Planning department.

Mr. Nordstrom stated that for the commission's purposes, he would like to have Mendon Road and Ironstone identified because all of the rest is Union Village instead of trying to work backwards and trying to outline where Union Village is, just to outline Mendon Road, Ironstone and Birch Hill.

Mr. Geremia's response was the previous contracts that they put out on the most recent vintage that in theory was all one project/district.

Mr. Nordstrom stated that there are three defined sewer districts in sewer usage area. The Union Village doesn't describe the streets it encompasses around it. It has Mendon Road and it describes in great detail the streets that the sewer district encompasses and it has a separate sewer system. And it has Ironstone and that clearly defines the streets.

Mr. Geremia stated that everything else is Union Village.

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Mr. Nordstrom's suggestion to Mr. Geremia that rather than spend an awful lot of time to carve out which one Union Village is and go with the ones they know and the assumption is all the rest is Union Village and that would include the Branch River pump station.

Mrs. Briggs attended a meeting and discussed the Branch River complex and what those people will soon be looking to figure out what they are going to do with that property and they want input from the commission on Great Road. Knowing that they are willing to put in the money and time and infrastructure and consider that area as well and knowing that there are failures. She stated that it would be environmentally safe because they are right on the river. They are

located at the other end of Great Road and maybe part of the Willerval which would take in the fire station and maybe within the Great Road east but would have to go back and look.

Mr. Geremia asked Mrs. Briggs what are the procedures that are followed in order to put a bond referendum together?

Mr. Nordstrom stated that it was discussed and that some of the people are unable to wait. He feels to address it to the town council and explained to them that the most cost effective way of doing it in terms of users is sewer every single district that is outlined in the document and its going to cost estimate \$30-\$60 million and in terms of evening out the high and low cost and doing it the fairest way. Or the other alternative is to break it down into small things and the town council would have to stand up to the irate people when they get their \$40,000 sewer assessment and alternative go with a maintenance district and do it with the whole town. He stated that the decisions have to be made now and not defer them. He stated that maybe it is way over their heads and he is unsure if they are prepared to deal with type of thing.

Mr. Geremia stated that then the town would have to vote for a town wide bond referendum. What they use the revenue bond for is for the treatment plant operators. It would be all of the present users that would pay for it. Everybody gets to assess it. He stated that it must be sold to the community. The sewer districts have been defined and

the next step would be to meet with the council and with the funding.

Mr. Nordstrom stated that all they have done is defined the problems and the sewer end of it.

Mrs. Briggs also stated that it is only for half of the town.

Mr. Nordstrom's response was that they have looked at the rest of the town and can not put sewers. They are going to follow under the septic tank and waster water management.

Mr. Geremia made the point that they are sparsely populated and because of the logistics of getting it from point A to point B and that it doesn't make economic sense at this game.

Mr. Geremia stated that there are two aspects.

Mr. Nordstrom explained that there are two choices, either spend \$40 million and try to pass a \$40 million bond and sewer the town as much as they can and then set up a septic tank maintenance district for the other areas or set up a septic tank maintenance district for the whole town and throw up our hands in the air and we will never be able to sewer economically.

Mr. Geremia is in agreement unfortunately he stated he couldn't offer any answers to that.

Mrs. Briggs is also in agreement and feels that they should be sewerred and feels that they should move forward. She stated that there are many sensitive areas that have been identified.

Mr. Geremia feels that ideally, take the \$30 million or whatever the amount comes out to, and bump it up by contingency and say that is what they are going to go after and then begin and have identified the future district and begin the sewer program and then break it down into phases.

Mr. Nordstrom feels that the best approach to do and alternative to go with is one bond issue, understand that the whole town cannot be sewerred, come up with a septic maintenance district, which is still a commitment by the town. If the bond issue doesn't pass and can try and put it out in smaller increments, that all those people that are not getting sewers until at a later date they will request to get exempted and that will change the whole economics.

Mr. Connolly stated that the DEM and EPA the environmental strictures will just keep getting more strict and stringent.

Mr. Geremia stated that the benefit is that you need to sewer as much as you can for the simple fact to even out the cost and there is nothing worse than to put a bond referendum together and breaking it out into districts.

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Mr. Geremia stated that with the wastewater district and what they proposed was some sort of the middle of the road where there is annual inspections and if it failed, repairs that are required. He stated that they can look at mandatory or take away the mandatory but they need the input from the Planning department to make that decision and would the town want to do that.

Mrs. Briggs expressed that the town isn't prepared to support the existing sewer system with the personnel that they have. If the waste water district is to be added on top of it, there would be a whole set of administrative costs to go along with that.

Mr. Geremia's response was absolutely and they have identified those.

Mr. Nordstrom asked Mr. Geremia how do they get the money to upgrade their septic system?

Mr. Geremia's response is that they go through SRF, once a criteria is established.

Mr. Nordstrom asked if the town doesn't have to loan them the money?

Mr. Geremia's response was no, they would have to take an individual loan through SRF. The town has to set a criteria and qualify the individuals, but that is it. They don't have to administer the loan nor are they responsible for the loan. Those are the things that by adopting this, he stated you could do that. If the Planning Board doesn't adopt this and it is taken out of the plan, that is fine. It is just implied that everything else is ISDS management.

Mr. Nordstrom feels that before they have a public hearing that the commission needs to educate the public officials before educating the public of what is in the plan and what the recommendation is.

Mrs. Briggs stated that the amount is \$36.7 million and the total would be \$52 million by the time it is done.

Mr. Geremia stated that the next criteria would be to establish the ability to do revenue bonds.

Mr. Nordstrom stated that the first step would be to meet with the town council and to get them to recognize the problem. In response to the problem, refer to what the engineer had done and that there is a recommendation and how does the problem get addressed? The recognition of the problem is to update the failed septic systems, public health issues.

Mr. Geremia offered to make the same public presentation at the workshop with the town council.

Mr. Connolly agreed with Mr. Geremia and Mr. Nordstrom to have the town council be on board and be significant players on selling the proposal to the town.

Mr. Geremia stated that he could explain the purpose of the bond even though it is a sewer district town wide that has to pass it.

Mrs. Briggs stated that the enterprise fund has to be explained also.

Mr. Connolly stated that they have to convince the powers to be for the need of the project. Once they see the problem then here is the solution.

Mr. Nordstrom still feels that the most important thing to start off is to get the town council to recognize that there is a problem.

Mr. Geremia asked if there was a list of those people or groups who petitioned or something that can be presented to the town council?

Mrs. Briggs stated that she does have names, the areas are Park Drive, Warren Avenue, Greene Street, waterford district.

Mr. Nordstrom feels that it's a good point that all the problems should

be addressed, they won't be able to pass all the small ones or one big problem.

Mrs. Briggs stated that there are folks among the 15 whom actually when they bought their house and when Union Village was being sewered, they were originally included in the Great Road east project. Within the next two years they received a letter saying they would be sewered as well. Back then they didn't go from Union Village over to Great Road east which would have been the logical course of events. So therefore those same folks are now sitting there and 15 years ago they were told that they would receive it in two years. What is going on and where is it and none of it is documented anywhere and we do not have any of that information available.

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Mr. Nordstrom stated he will copy those pages and make his comments and fax it over directly to Geremia.

Mr. Geremia stated that he will get the secretary a package summary together to send on behalf of the Sewer Commission in preparation. The executive summary summarizes everything and identifies the problem areas. He will revise the cover once he knows where and when the meeting will take place.

Mr. Geremia stated that the meeting will be approximately two hours

and he will set the ground work as to why and how it can be funded but he feels it would be better for the sewer commissions to talk about the bonding. And he will provide them with a history lesson of how the districts were formed.

Mr. Nordstrom can speak literally of what has happen with past council as far as the residents coming to the sewer commission with their complaints and the commission didn't have any power to do anything except that they did the facility plan.

Mrs. Briggs stated that now they have updates and they are dealing with today dollars not dealing with 15 year old dollars and that the needs haven't changed.

Mr. Geremia stated that the unfortunate thing about the town is that there are a lot of state roads which are extremely costly and the ledge.

Mr. Geremia stated that they are very costly and put it on ledge and put it everywhere.

Mrs. Briggs stated that it would be important if Mr. Geremia has any pictures to show them regarding those new types of systems.

Mr. Geremia stated he does have pictures and he will make them understand and he'll present to them, that it is a mini treatment plant,

it has pumps, blowers, motors and it has repairs and it needs to be maintained.

Mrs. Briggs will call the town council President and try and get on their agenda and find out when they can in the month of February and try and do it as a workshop with the commission and the council together and ask Mr. Phillips to be there.

Mr. Geremia stated to also ask the Planning Board to attend since they are the ISDS program. He had sent him an e-mail of all the sections that pertain to the ISDS and he was going to review it with the Planning Board. He stated that they need that input.

Mrs. Briggs will speak with the town council President and Mike to meet and make a decision for the sake of the town.

4. CORRESPONDENCE AND COMMUNICATIONS

Mr. Connolly received his letter from the clerk stating he has been reappointed to a 5 year term expiring 12/1/2011.

Mrs. Briggs reviewed all of her correspondence received. No further correspondence received.

5. OLD BUSINESS

Mrs. Briggs reviewed the Rules & Regulations for 2007 and all changes have been incorporated. Mrs. Briggs wants to make note

that when the Secretary (Pat Paul) was indexing past information, as a result of updating the Rules & Regulations effort, a motion was made and approved back in January of 2001 suggested that the Rules & Regulations be change regarding the word Chairman to Chairperson be placed in there and take it under advisement and incorporate it next year for 2008.

Mrs. Briggs elects Chair and Vice Chairperson.

MOTION by Mr. Nordstrom and seconded by Mr. McGee that they elect the existing slate of officers for 2007 and the Chairperson would continue to be Mrs. Briggs and the Vice-Chairperson is Mr. Connolly. The motion passed 5-0 on a roll call vote.

6. NEW BUSINESS

Mrs. Briggs reviewed the 2007 Sewer Commission meetings calendar.

She will hold a workshop with the town council for the month of February and cancel February's regular sewer commission meeting. She will suggest to the council if they may prefer to attend a sewer commission meeting instead of attending a town council meeting. She stated to cancel the February 14th regular sewer commission meeting on the annual calendar. Anything that will be held in the month of February will be billed as a workshop. She feels that there probably will not be anything else that they will need to discuss. There are no emergency projects that will come up at this time.

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7. ADJOURN

MOTION by Mr. Connolly, seconded by Mr. Nordstrom and voted unanimously on an aye 5-0 vote to adjourn the meeting at 8:10 P.M.

Respectfully Submitted By,

Patricia A. Paul

Sewer Commission Secretary